

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, D.C. #143
ALINA ZERANSKI

DECEMBER 29, 1976

"AYUDA" MEANS HELP IN SPANISH
(INSERTS AVAILABLE IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: DATELINE: WASHINGTON, D.C. -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE,
PLACES AND EVENTS IN THE CAPITAL OF THE UNITED STATES --
BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK AT THIS
TIME. TODAY, A REPORT PREPARED BY ALINA ZERANSKI ON A
VISIT TO AN ORGANIZATION BRIDGING THE LANGUAGE BARRIER
FOR NEWCOMERS. HERE IS _____
WITH THE STORY.

NARR: ON A BUSY STREET OF THE NORTHWESTERN SECTION OF WASHINGTON,
D.C., THERE IS A SERVICE AGENCY CALLED "AYUDA", WHICH MEANS
HELP IN SPANISH. AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT THIS ORGANIZATION
DOES; IT HELPS SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE SPEAKING IMMIGRANTS
HAVING COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. TO
THIS OFFICE THEY COME FOR INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT.

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THERE ARE MANY ANNOUNCEMENTS HANGING ON THE BULLETIN BOARD
OF THE WAITING ROOM AND USEFUL LEAFLETS ARE DISPLAYED ON THE
TABLE. THREE BILINGUAL RECEPTIONISTS MEET THE VISITORS. SMALL
PROBLEMS ARE HANDLED QUICKLY: JOSE HERNANDEZ LEARNS ABOUT A
DANCE FOR YOUNG LATINOS; AN ELDERLY WOMAN IS DIRECTED TO A
CLINIC GIVING FREE FLU SHOTS; TWO MOTHERS INQUIRE ABOUT
BABY-SITTING; A HOUSEWIFE IS DIRECTED TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE
CLASSES. BUT "AYUDA" HAS ALSO ON STAFF SKILLED COUNSELORS AND
THREE ATTORNEYS FOR MORE SERIOUS MATTERS.

RICHARD GUTIERREZ, WHO IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THIS NON-PROFIT
CITIZENS ORGANIZATION, EXPLAINS HOW IT GOT STARTED.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- GUTIERREZ

"IT WAS ORGANIZED ABOUT FOUR YEARS AGO BY SOME VOLUNTEER LAW STUDENTS AT AREA UNIVERSITIES, THE AREA OF LAW SCHOOLS BASICALLY, TO PROVIDE THEMSELVES WITH CLINICAL EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD, IN ADDITION TO THEIR TEXT WORK STUDIES. MANY OF THESE WERE MEXICAN-AMERICANS OR PUERTO RICANS OR LATINOS THEMSELVES, WHO WERE ENROLLED IN LAW SCHOOL AND THEY FELT A CERTAIN ATTACHEMENT WITH THIS COMMUNITY. WITHIN ONE YEAR, THEY FOUND THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO PROVIDE YEAR ROUND SERVICES IN THAT SITUATION. SO, THEY SAW THAT THE CASE LOAD WAS SUFFERING AND THAT THE ONLY WAY THAT THEY COULD RECTIFY THIS WAS TO HAVE FULL TIME STAFF."

NARR: AT THAT POINT "AYUDA" WAS INCORPORATED AND STARTED SEEKING FUNDS FROM CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS. SOON AFTERWARD, IT MOVED FROM THE FIRST ONE-ROOM OFFICE TO ITS PRESENT SPACIOUS, EASILY ACCESSIBLE QUARTERS. AND SINCE THAT TIME, IT HAS BEEN FLOODED WITH REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE LATIN COMMUNITY WHICH NUMBERS MORE THAN 70,000 PEOPLE IN THE WASHINGTON AREA. NOW, THE AGENCY OPERATES SIX DAYS A WEEK, HELPING CLOSE TO 200 PERSONS. EIGHT MEMBERS OF THE STAFF AND SEVERAL VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS ON DUTY AT "AYUDA" HEADQUARTERS. THE AGENCY IS NOW OPERATING WITH ONLY PRIVATE MONEY. AGAIN, MISTER GUTIERREZ -

TAPE: CUT TWO -- GUTIERREZ

"A COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION, SUCH AS AYUDA, HAS BEEN ABLE TO OPERATE IN A PRIVATE SECTOR. HERE WE HAVE A UNIQUE SITUATION, I THINK IT IS UNIQUE, THAT WE HAVE HERE A COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION, OPERATING IN A PRIVATE SECTOR THROUGH PRIVATE DONATIONS. WE HAVE NO FEDERAL MONIES AT THIS TIME."

NARR: AYUDA CLIENTS SPEAK LITTLE OR NO ENGLISH. THEY MAY HAVE A LIMITED LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND THE CUSTOMS AND INSTITUTIONS THEY ENCOUNTER HERE THEY MAY FIND CONFUSING. LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT THE PROBLEMS BEING SOLVED HERE TODAY. ONE OF THE ATTORNEYS IS IN COURT REPRESENTING A MEXICAN-AMERICAN IN A LANDLORD-TENANT DISPUTE. IN A SEPARATE ROOM, A COUNSELOR

NARR:

(CONT'D) TALKS WITH A RECENT WIDOW, WHO WAS LEFT WITH THREE SMALL CHILDREN AND NO SUPPORT. SHE WILL BE HELPED TO GET PUBLIC FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND LATER TO FIND A JOB AND A DAY-CARE CENTER FOR HER SONS. MEANWHILE, ONE OF THE VOLUNTEERS, A RETIRED SOCIAL WORKER, IS ACCOMPANYING A YOUNG LADY TO THE POLICE STATION TO EXPLAIN TO THE OFFICERS THAT SHE WAS SENT A TICKET FOR A TRAFFIC VIOLATION SHE NEVER COMMITTED. ANOTHER VOLUNTEER IS CALLING A HOSPITAL ON BEHALF OF A CUBAN-BORN RESIDENT WHO WAS OVERCHARGED BY MISTAKE.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- GUTIERREZ

"SERVICES THAT ARE PROVIDED HERE ARE BASICALLY LEGAL SERVICES, A WHOLE ARRAY OF LEGAL SERVICES WHICH WILL BE DOMESTIC RELATIONS, SOME EMIGRATION WORK IS CLASSIFIED LEGAL, CONSUMER CASE WORK, LANDLORD-TENANT CASES. OTHER SERVICES ARE PARA-LEGAL. AND ACTUALLY, THE MAJORITY OF OUR CASES ARE NOT LEGAL AT ALL, THEY ARE IN WHAT YOU'D CALL SOCIAL SERVICES."

NARR: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS CONSISTS OF SIXTEEN PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE WELFARE OF SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE SPEAKING NEWCOMERS. THEY ARE MAINLY PROFESSIONALS OF LATIN ORIGIN. ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST BE BILINGUAL. THEIR HELP MAY RANGE FROM FILLING OUT FORMS OR PREPARING LETTERS TO CALLING THE ELECTRIC COMPANY WITH A COMPLAINT ON BEHALF OF A CLIENT. CELIA DIEGO IS A STAFF COORDINATOR OF THE VOLUNTEERS.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- DIEGO

"RIGHT NOW, WE HAVE APPROXIMATELY 25 WORKING OVER A PERIOD OF ONE WEEK. THEIR WORK PERIODS VARY FROM FOUR HOURS TO AS MUCH AS TWENTY OR THIRTY HOURS A WEEK. MY JOB IS TO RECRUIT, TO TRAIN, TO SUPERVISE AND EVALUATE THE VOLUNTEERS AND THE CASE WORK WHICH WE DO AT THE FRONT. I RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS FROM MANY OF THE UNIVERSITIES HERE IN WASHINGTON, IN MARYLAND AND IN VIRGINIA. WE ALSO HAVE SEVERAL VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE PRIVATE CITIZENS, WHO ARE JUST INTERESTED IN GIVING SOME OF THEIR TIME ON THEIR DAYS OFF OR ON SATURDAYS."

NARR: MANY OF THE VOLUNTEERS ARE LAW STUDENTS AND RETIRED PROFESSIONALS. IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO DEAL WITH ALL THE CASES WITHOUT THEIR HELP EVEN THOUGH LAST YEAR'S BUDGET WAS 73,000 DOLLARS AND THAT AMOUNT WAS DOUBLED THIS YEAR.

ANNCR: THIS HAS BEEN DATELINE, WASHINGTON, D.C. -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS IN AND AROUND THE NATION'S CAPITAL AND, BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK AT THIS TIME. TODAY, YOU HEARD ABOUT AYUDA, A SERVICE AGENCY FOR LATIN IMMIGRANTS. NEXT -----
ANOTHER DATELINE.

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